



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY RECOGNIZED IN TENNESSEE – JUNE 15

TENNESSEANS ASKED TO HELP KEEP THE ELDERLY SAFE FROM MISTREATMENT

NASHVILLE, TN – In recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) is encouraging Tennesseans to take an active role to prevent and fight against elder abuse. Tennesseans can help protect our elderly population by knowing the signs of elder abuse and stepping up to report suspected abuse.

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, each year an estimated 5 million older Americans are victims of elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation and experts believe that for every case of elder abuse or neglect reported, as many as 23 cases go unreported. In Tennessee last year, the DHS Adult Protective Services (APS) Program investigated more than 9600 reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation of elderly and vulnerable adults of which 72% of cases were related to those 60 years of age and older.

In partnership with state agencies including the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability (TCAD) and the Tennessee Vulnerable Adult Coalition (TVAC) events are being held across the state to educate on elder abuse and spread awareness. Most importantly, these groups are encouraging Tennesseans to know the signs of abuse and to report suspected instances of mistreatment.

Signs of abuse might include:

- Bruising, especially on the torso or head
- Frequent injuries with the excuse of “accidents”
- Threatening, belittling or controlling behavior by the caregiver that you see
- Unusual weight loss, malnutrition or dehydration
- Unsanitary and/or unsafe living conditions: bugs, soiled bedding and clothes, no heat or running water
- Sudden changes in vulnerable adults financial condition

If abuse or neglect is suspected, Tennesseans are required to report it to APS by calling 1-888-APS-TENN (1-888-277-8366).

Monday, June 15, is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Tennesseans are encouraged to wear something purple, the official elder abuse awareness color and to spread the word about our responsibility to help protect the elderly from abuse.

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CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR
400 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TN 37243
615.313.4700

Gov. Bill Haslam has issued a proclamation acknowledging World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and urges Tennesseans “to work to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation of elderly Tennesseans and to raise awareness and prevention around all people affected by this devastating crime.”

“All Tennesseans play a part in helping to keep our elderly population safe and protected from harm,” said DHS Commissioner Raquel Hatter. “You, the community, family and friends serve as gatekeepers and the first line of protection. Please add your strength to Tennessee’s commitment to protecting the elderly.”

“The best way to prevent elder abuse is to be aware of your elderly family members and friends,” said TCAD Executive Director Jim Shulman. “If the caregiver is overwhelmed, urge him or her to get help from family friends or the local Area Agency on Aging and Disability.”

To learn more about Area Agencies on Aging and Disability (AAAD), which have resources for caregivers, home and community based services and home delivered meals for seniors, visit <http://www.tn.gov/aging/elderabuse.html>. AAAD’s also have a Long-Term Care Ombudsman program to assist nursing home residents who have complaints regarding their facility.

For more information on the Adult Protective Services program in Tennessee and the signs of abuse visit: http://www.tn.gov/humanserv/adfam/afs_aps.html.

More information on elder abuse can be found at: <http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/index.aspx>.

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